

My Purpose tonight is to endeavor to present to my hearers a very brief account of the Genesis of our West Coast as it applies to our era of colonization, giving some details of its discovery, and the immediate results of this discovery, then glancing, very superficially, at the long years of development which has really only lately acquired an up-to-date momentum, and the circumstances which have ~~led to~~ brought about these results.

In presenting the large number of illustrations, I propose to take my audience by way of the Sea to Macquarie Harbour, from thence to visiting all the places of interest in the Heemskirk, Zeehan, and Dundas districts, then, coming back to Strahan on our homeward journey, we ^{will} pass through the Mt. Lyell Railway, Smeethers, & mine, and then taking the over-land track, we will notice some of the very striking scenery "en route" to Hobart.

WE all know that Tasmania was first discovered by Capt. Tasman of the Dutch East India Company, but a good many do not know, that the West Coast was the first land sighted by Tasman. — This happened on Novr 24th 1642, and the particular land first seen was named afterwards, by Lieut. Flinders & Dr. Bass in 1798, Point Hibbs, after the master of the sloop in which they sailed were at that time conducting a survey. — They also named the two mountains, described by Tasman, Heemskirk and Zeehan, after Tasman's ships of that name. — This was the voyage which solved beyond question the inequality of Tasmania — Dr. Bass, after a previous expedition having pronounced such a possibility — and which brought him an everlasting renown, which his intrepid perseverance deserved & won. — [Flinders and Bass did not

explore our West Coast further than
noting its Coastal Configuration; and it re-
mained for Captain James Kelly, one of the
most active, daring, and resolute, of our old
pioneers, to undertake the task of a detailed
examination of the Coast. - This he did in
a small rigid open 5 oared whale boat,
with a crew of 4 men, sailing from Hobart
Town on December 12th 1816, and returning, after
making a circuit of Tasmania on 30th of
Jan'y. of the next year, or after an absence of
49 days - smart work when we consider
that a vessel of that period usually took
about a month to do only the trip from
Hobart Town to Macquarie Harbour.

Kelly discovered Port Dorey on 17th Dec^r
naming it after the Governor of the day Col.
Dorey - Bathurst Harbour, after the
Secretary of State for the Colonies - and
Point Lucy after Col. Dorey's daughter.
On the 25th - Christmas Day - we find

them sheltering from heavy weather in
a snug Cove near High Rocky Point.
Kelly in his log says - "This day we had
a glorious feed for dinner - two black swans,
one roasted (stuck up) the other was made into
a sea pie - a three decker in a large iron pot.
- a first rate Christmas dinner for the West
Coast of Van Diemens Land. After dinner
we named the Cove Christmas Cove, by
throwing a glass of brandy into the water and
giving three hearty Cheers! On the 28th
they rounded Cape Sorell and adveid a strong
Current running from a South Easterly direction
which induced the belief that there ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~was~~
was a large river running from that direction.
- He says "The whole face of the Coast was
on fire, - a lucky circumstance for us.
The smoke was so thick we could not
see a hundred yards ahead of the boat.
On pulling ^{into} the Narrows at the Small
Entrance Island, we heard a large
number of natives shouting and making

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a great noise, as if they were hunting Kangaroo. It was highly fortunate the smoke was so thick; for, had the natives seen the boat pass through the narrow entrance, it is possible they would have killed every person on board, by discharging, in their usual way, volleys of spears and stones. In the afternoon the smoke cleared away a little, and we found ourselves in a large sheet of water near a small island, where we landed & found plenty of black swans on their nests, and plenty of eggs. — On the 29th the morning was clear: we could see nearly all over the harbour. The island we named "Elizabeth" Island, in honour of Mrs Gordon, the lady of James Gordon Esq^r of Pittwater. The Harbour was named Macquarie Harbour, in honour of the then Governor of New South Wales. We launched and pulled to a point on the south shore, nearly opposite the island where we caught about a dozen black swans to eat. ~~After obtaining a fresh supply, we rested~~

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~~43~~ We had 4 of our stock left that we had brought from Port Dancy. After obtaining a fresh supply, we restored those 4 to liberty in Macquarie Harbour, & named the Point "Liberty Point" in consequence. At sunset we hauled up on an island 25 miles up the Harbour, which was named Sarah Island, in honour of Mrs Birch, wife of Thomas W^m Birch of Hobart Town. On the morning of the 30th we launched and proceeded further up the harbour until we came to the mouth of a fresh-water river. Made a sketch of it and named it the "Gordon River" in honour of Mr Gordon of Pittwater, who had kindly lent the boat for this particular trip of discovery. — This day we proceeded up an inlet to the southward of Gordon River, which was named Birch Inlet, in honour of Mr Birch. — On the 31st we went round Macquarie Harbour, made a sketch of it, and found it to be a bar harbour only

for vessels of light depth of water.

We found also Huon Pine growing on the banks of the Harbour. —

~~We~~ ^{Kelly} left Macquarie Harbour on January 1st 1816, and after a long day's sail before a strong breeze, got nearly swamped at 8 o'clock in the evening in trying to run into the river known now as the "Piemian River" — Kelly named it the "Retreat". — The name "Piemian" — or "Piemans" River, was originated long after ~~this~~ this, by Mr Lucas the Government pilot at Macquarie Harbour. "Nobby" Lucas, as he was popularly known as, was the terror of absconding prisoners, or "bolters", and it was on one of these search expeditions, when 3 bolters were out, that "Nobby" came upon one of them, alone, endeavouring to get a raft together to cross the river. — This man whose name was Pearce, had been sent to Macquarie Harbour for selling unwholesome meat, made into pies, about the streets of Hobart Town, and

^{who} ~~and~~ afterwards obtained an unenviable notoriety, while, as an absconder on two separate occasions, indulging in the ~~most~~ most atrocious murders & cannibalism ever heard of in Tasmania. He ultimately was hanged at Hobart Town jail in 1823. — Lucas, not knowing that Kelly had already named the river, called it the "Piemian's River", and that name it has ever since retained.

[Kelly, as a reward for the services rendered on this memorable voyage, received exclusive privileges for some years to cut pine at Macquarie Harbour, and in 1819 he was appointed Harbour Master and Pilot for the Derwent. He died suddenly while returning to his home in Campbell St — Rock House — by the creek, which was built by him in 1818 — and is now part of the Sir George Arthur Hotel.

— Kelly's voyage was a private enterprise, but the Government in 1824 sent a Mr J. Hobbs on a similar expedition, resulting in no additional information, as far as the

West Coast is concerned, to that already given by Kelly.

[About the year 1821 the Government were looking round for a suitable place for confining and punishing the worst class of their prisoners, and on Kelly's recommendation Macquarie Harbour was selected, as it was considered it had the 3fold advantage of affording the means of employing the prisoners in such manner as to make them severely feel their punishment; of preventing, by its locality, the chance of their escape, and of rendering their labour instrumental, in some measure, to the purpose of repaying the expenses of the establishment. Two brigs were despatched with prisoners on the 12th of Decr 1821 for Macquarie Harbour — one reached somewhere on the Coast of New Holland (or Australia) and after considerable delay was obliged to return to Hobart Town, while the ~~other~~ other, more fortunate, reached the harbour after a voyage of 3 weeks, and on Jan'y 2nd

1822 Sarahs Island was chosen as the ultra penal settlement of Van Diemen's Land. — It would be out of my province — even if I had the inclination — to sketch the thrilling history of this awful place. — Its cruelty, its murders, its mutinies, its escapes, its cannibalism, only tend to show to what a depth of depravity humanity, under certain conditions, can descend. It was not, however, without the pale of hell from the good, for, during the latter years of its existence we find good, brave, earnest men, endeavouring by good example, and loving endeavours, to bring spiritual truth with its resultant comfort before the poor broken spirited & foolish population of Sarahs Island, and it may be of interest to know that it was a Wesleyan who first actively or practically introduced religious thought & living at Macquarie Harb. [Sergeant Waddy of the 3rd Buffs was the first man to sow the seed while he was stationed at Sarahs Island. Then came

a Mr Statchumson, then Rev Wm Schofield, who laboured so long & successfully; then Rev. John Allen Manton, who ~~was the~~ remained till the settlement was evacuated.

A rather gruesome testimony of the good work done by these workers, may be stated, as it shows, also, somewhat of the "regime" prevailing there. The ^{official} records of punishments since - for the 3 years previous to the advent of the missionaries - 188 sentenced were 6280 lashes, while during 3 years of spiritual ministrations 53 sentenced men received 973 lashes.

In the year 1832 the Settlement was visited by James Backhouse, & George Washington Walker, of the Society of Friends, two men whose memories live to day in Tasmania, more especially Mr Walker, whose long residence in Hobart afforded such a telling example of true spiritual life. — These men - the "Howards" of Australia - under the

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favour of the British Government, visited all the Australian Prison establishments for the purpose of Philanthropic observation, which the moral weight of their connection, rendered of great moment. ~~Backhouse is described by Mr. West in his History of Tasmania as being "a gentleman of prudence and sagacity; he lifted up his heart to God: took his pocket compass, and thus, escaped some perils both by land and sea; — ~~Backhouse~~ Christianity exemplified and carried to England a reputation, from which detraction has taken nothing, and which friendship would rear & desire to improve. — Mr Backhouse, in his very interesting account of his travels, gives the first description I know of, of crossing the bar at Macquarie Harbour, now a days not of such a thrilling~~

(13) Character as it was then, ^{but a description of it} ~~and it~~ may help to afford some comfort to those who even now dread this spot, when they realize what the Crossing meant in 1832. At that time our friend "Nobby" Lucas reigned supreme at the Macquarie Head in the Capacity of Harbour Master & Pilot, and his station was situated at the end of the long beach stretching about S.W. from the present signal station, under shelter of rising ground. — [On this occasion Backhouse & Walker were accompanied by Mr Manton who was on his way to relieve Mr Schofield. They had been knocking about for nearly a month in the Foot Brig Lascar — a little boat of 128 tons — and were all very much exhausted when they arrived within sight of the Pilot Station. — "The pilot hoisted his signal to enter: we immediately stood in and in a few minutes the opportunity to return was past.

42 The pilot put off knowing better than ourselves our danger: his boat Cored one he seen now and again above the billows; but he was soon alongside, and ordered all the sails to be squared, that we might go right before the wind. On coming on board, the women & children ^{were ordered} below, and ^{then} came to me and advised me to go below also. I replied, that if we were lost I should like to see the last of it, for the sight was awfully grand. Laying hold of a rope at the stern, he said, "Then put your arm round this rope and don't speak a word." To my companion he gave similar instructions, placing him at the opposite quarter. A man was sent into the chains on each side, with the sounding lead. The pilot went to the bows, and nothing was now to be heard through the roar of the wind and waves, but his voice calling to the helmsman, the helmsman's answer, and the voices of the men in the chains, counting off

the fathoms as the water became shallower. The vessel was cast alternately from one side to the other, to prevent her sticking on the sand, in which case the billows would have run over her, and would have driven her upon a sand-bank a mile from the shore, on which they were breaking with fury. The fathoms decreased, and the men counted off the feet, of which we drew $7\frac{1}{2}$, and there were but $4\frac{1}{2}$ in the hollow of the sea, until they called out eleven feet. At this moment a high billow carried us forward on its rising head into deep water. The pilot's countenance relaxed: he looked like a man released from under the fallow, and coming aft, shook hands with each individual congratulating them on a safe arrival in Macquarie Harbour. In leaving this part of the history of the West Coast I may add that this pearl

settlement was broken up in 1834 and all the prisoners were transferred to the great Port Arthur establishment where better supervision by the central authority was affordable.

[After the Government had left the West Coast, "Hiving" was the only industry found, and several families resided both at Macquarie Harbour and at Port Daney, engaged in that occupation. Port Daney was, at one time, during the whaling era a very busy place, and, ~~there~~ ^{as} on authority I have no reason to doubt, I was told that in the fifties, as many as 25 ships have been seen in Port Daney at one time, and 15 trying out! Hobart Town whalers were always considered the tip-top men!

[In the "Fifties" when the Continental gold finds were occupying the attention of every-one, the possibilities of our own colony as a gold producer was earnestly discussed

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by the press, and by public assemblies, examinations of the Country were instituted, and as an instance of the public spirit of the time, I may mention that at one meeting alone, in 1856, at Hobart Town, £2000 was subscribed in the room towards a fund for exploratory purposes. — [In 1859 Mr Charles Foxell was appointed Government Geologist, and one of the first tasks he undertook was to examine the Country round Macquarie Harbour and the Frenchmans Cap, with a view of ascertaining the probabilities of obtaining payable gold in that locality. His party consisted of 31 individuals, besides himself, and a number of highly qualified miners & diggers, besides bushmen, messengers &c. and in running up his report on the result of his most exhaustive operations & observations, he says the expedition was unsatisfactory, gold not having been found in payable

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quantities, with perhaps the exception ^{16/40} of the King River, which, he says, has rather a promising appearance, but is of ^{un}considerable area. Foxell, however, accumulated a good deal of geological information, and made maps which have since been used as the basis of nearly all ~~the~~ subsequent work in that quarter. [We meet with nothing of consequence in the way of ^{mineral discovery} ~~discovery~~ from Foxell's time, until the discovery of Mt Rischhoff by ^{at} Mr James Smith, ^{a very fortunate} which ~~opened~~ infused new life into the Colony, and gave an immense impetus to exploration. Mr C. P. Sprent, ultimately Surveyor General, and whose untimely death in 1887 deprived the Colony of one of ~~the~~ most useful sons, was at that time district Surveyor at Mt. Rischhoff and his explorations to the N. W. of the mountain, convinced him that this the discovery was but a new order of thing and that valuable minerals would be found in the unexplored country

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beyond. The government sent him out exploring in 1876, and the result ~~of~~ ^{was} that ~~expedition~~ ^{expedition} was most satisfactory. It established the fact that a zone of metalliferous country ~~existed~~ ^{extended} from Mt. Bischof to the sea beyond Mt. Heemskirk, and that tin and gold in payable quantities were to be found there. As soon as these facts became known prospecting became general, and I think from that date we may say that the long ^{darkness} ~~night~~ of the West Coast had at last been broken, and day began to break. Heemskirk tin mining was not a success - as many today will remember. The ruins of Cortez machinery and extensive workings bear mournful testimony to day, of in most cases, ill-advised haste and ignorance. Trial Harbour was discovered during the Heemskirk days, and it was of use to the miners there, as it ~~was~~ ^{became} a ~~short~~ ^{short} cut to Graham. It was first found by the Karlesons (of Mt. Lyell fame) in 1881, and was named by them

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after their cutter, the "Trial", which made several trips there, but was at last caught by heavy weather and went to pieces in the harbour. To call it a "Harbour" is a misnomer, for it is really a roadstead, simple consisting of a channel between two reefs, one on the North and another on the South side, and can only be used in calm weather. Just while the Heemskirk business was fizzling out, the King River alluvial gold fields were discovered by Mr Con. Lynch - a very energetic prospector. This took place in 1882, and we may almost date the founding of Strahan to that time, the majority of the Heemskirk miners going to Strahan (then Long Bay). Silver was also discovered in 1882 by Frank Long, but it was not until the discovery of the Silver Queen Lode in 1891, when the Broken Hill excitement was on, that any extensive activity began, and from then the stream of population set in

toward the wilderness of Zeehan, and today we find, instead, ^{thriving} a ~~great~~ town ranking 3rd in Tasmania, with great promise of becoming ultimately the largest City of the Colony. Then we have the discovery of Mt. Lyell, ^{now} the second largest Copper mine in the world, and the shows of Dundas, Mt. Read, Rosebery ^{ect. ect.} ~~to etc.~~. Who, in the face of such startling developments as these, can doubt the future of our ~~little colony~~ West Coast, and of our little Colony? I believe that the West Coast of Tasmania is not only going to save us from financial ~~distress~~ ^{straits}, but is going to place us right in the front as one of the principle mining centers of the world! — And now, ladies & gentlemen, ^{Mr. Chapman &} I will not further trespass on your time and patience, but will proceed to pass before you the illustrated evidence of our West Coast developments.

West Coast

1. Entrance Macquarie Harbour
2. Strahan
3. Zeehan
4. Henty River
5. Smelters at Zeehan
6. Montezuma Falls
7. Hercules Tram
8. Pieman River
9. Rosebery
10. King River Gorge
12. Lyell Railway at Balls Creek
12. Queenstown
13. Lyell Smelters
14. Furnace Lyell Smelters
15. Lyell Mine and Gormanston
16. King River and Eldon Bluff
17. Frenchmans Range from Mt. Jukes
18. Mt. Darwin
19. Bird River Gorge
20. Kelly Basin
21. Gordon River at Marble Cliffs
22. Gordon River Gorge at the Great Bend

23. Ruins Settlement Island
24. Bramble Cove Port Davey
25. Hells Gates Port Davey